



Indiana Smallpox Vaccination Begins with Vaccinators

To support the President's national and state bioterrorism preparedness initiatives, Indiana began Phase One of its Smallpox Pre-Event Vaccination Project Tuesday, February 11, 2003.

That day, health professionals who will be vaccinators around the state received smallpox vaccinations at a Marion County clinic. These 93 volunteers were the first Indiana residents to be vaccinated against smallpox in more than 30 years. Indiana's last

smallpox cases were in 1948, when there were three cases and one death.

To launch the project, the Indiana State Department of Health presented a news conference in partnership with the Marion County Health Department. Wishard Memorial Hospital in Indianapolis provided the location for the news conference, where statewide media representatives learned about smallpox vaccination.

At the news conference, expert speakers offered information about Indiana's smallpox vaccination project, about the public health role in national readiness, and about the disease of smallpox. The speakers included Marion County Health Department Director Virginia Caine, M.D.; I.U. Professor of Medicine Kenneth Fife, M.D., Ph.D.; and State Epidemiologist Robert Teclaw, D.V.M., Ph.D..

Linda Dubak, R.N., from the ISDH



CAMERAMEN FOCUS on Linda Dubak, ISDH Acute Care (center), who administers a smallpox vaccination to one of six health care workers who received smallpox vaccinations in a demonstration for the media. Marion County Health Department Director Virginia Caine, M.D. (left) offers information at this media event about smallpox vaccinations and their role in the national public health readiness effort.

Photo by Daniel Axler

Acute Care Division, vaccinated six health professionals, who volunteered to receive their smallpox vaccinations in front of the media, so that reporters could further educate the public about smallpox vaccination.

These individuals were:

- Joe Francis, M.D., an internist from St. Vincent Hospitals and Health Services;
- Crystal Jones, M.D., medical director for Acute/Chronic Disease at the Marion County Health Department;
- Marion County Health Department nurses:
 - Carol Hinshaw, R.N.;
 - Connie Schneider, R.N.; and
 - Ann Styron, R.N.; and
- Bev Sheets, R.N., a contractor for the Indiana State Department of Health Immunization Program.

Everyone preparing to receive a smallpox vaccination undergoes an extensive screening process to determine if there are medical reasons why they should not be vaccinated. In addition, each volunteer receives follow-up checks to ensure that the vaccination has been effective. Comprehensive screening, education, and safety monitoring minimize the chances for reactions to the vaccine and preparations have been made to provide the care necessary if anyone has a vaccination reaction.

In Phase One of the Smallpox Pre-Event Vaccination Project, only select health professionals who have volunteered for Public Health Response Teams and Medical Response Teams are eligible to be vaccinated. These teams will provide Indiana with an immediate response capacity anywhere in the state in the unlikely event of an intentional release of smallpox



LINDA DUBAK administers a vaccination with a bifurcated needle, especially designed for the smallpox vaccination process.

Photo by Daniel Axler

It's Time to Think About *Race for The Cure* Preparation

Even though there is snow on the ground and temperatures are in the single digits (as this is written), spring is just around the corner. That's the signal to register for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Indianapolis Race for the Cure, which will be held on *Saturday, April 12th*.

Team Captain Tanya Hammer, ISDH Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, has requested that ISDH employees, "Please consider supporting this important cause by joining TEAM ISDH."

Hammer says team members can choose to participate in the 5K Run, 5K Walk, or the 1 Mile Family Walk. The team member entry fee is \$20, and all participants will receive a short-sleeve race T-shirt.

ISDH employees who wish to participate should make contact with a floor captain to pick up registration forms and information about the race:

- **Lower Level, 1st Floor, and 2nd Floor:** Martha Bonds, and Bert Harvey
- **3rd Floor:** Antoniette Holt and Michele Starkey
- **4th Floor, 5th Floor, and Weights**

and Measures: Molly Maguire, Andrea Klemm, and Karen Smith

■ **6th Floor, 7th Floor, and 8th Floor:** Carol Case and Tanya Hammer

■ **Special Institutions:** Barbara Gann

■ **ISDH Labs:** Eva Buis

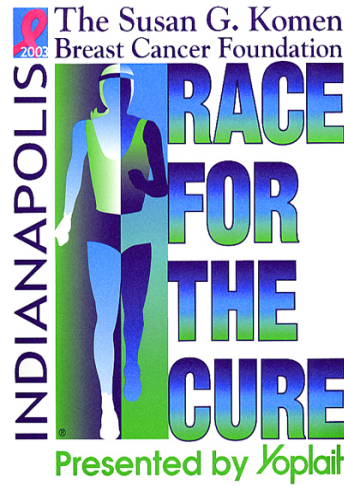
Team members do not have to be employees of ISDH, so feel free to recruit your friends and families for our team!

Those persons who are not employees who would like to join the ISDH team should contact Tanya Hammer at 317-233-7448.

All participating ISDH employees will be invited to a breakfast rally on Tuesday, April 10th, to get fired up and fueled up for the race!

If you are not able to participate in the actual race, you can sign up as a

Registration forms and entry fees must be turned in to ISDH floor captains by the registration deadline, Friday, MARCH 14TH



spirit entry. Spirit entries still complete an entry form, pay the \$20 fee, and receive a T-shirt, but do not plan to be at the actual race. You can also support TEAM ISDH by giving a donation for the Race for the Cure to one of our team members. Just look for pink ribbons on your co-workers nameplates to find out who will be racing on our team, and give your donation to one of those individuals (checks preferred, made out to

"Komen Indianapolis Race for the Cure"). Team members need to turn in all donations by Thursday, April 3rd.

"Many of our friends, family members, and co-workers have been touched by breast cancer. Join TEAM ISDH in honor or in memory of one of those very special people. Thank you for doing your part to eradicate this disease," Hammer said.

For more details contact the Race for the Cure Web site: www.komenindy.org

Flu Shots Can Still be Effective Given Late Season Peak

Shawn Richards, influenza surveillance coordinator, says it's still not too late to get a flu shot this season.

Richards says flu is peaking now, which is much later this year compared with previous seasons. Richards should know, because she assembles data reported by physicians from around the state. The physicians report as part of ISDH's Sentinel Surveillance System from October through May each season.

"We have excellent reporting physicians this year, whom we have worked very hard to recruit," Richards said. She issues a weekly data briefing to keep physicians up to date on the reported numbers of persons with flu-like symptoms and on the various strains of viruses that are analyzed by the ISDH lab from swabs provided by the physicians.

Because an estimated 20,000 persons die each year from influenza or its complications—like pneumonia—Richards

says that a flu shot should be seriously considered by everyone, especially by those whose immune systems are more likely to be less resistant to the flu virus and pneumonia. High risk groups include seniors over 65 years of age, pregnant women in their second and third trimesters, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, and adults and children with asthma or pulmonary complications.

However, Richards says that a shot is contraindicated for anyone with an allergy to eggs, since eggs are used for growing doses of the dead virus flu vaccine.

Richards says that flu

vaccinations are widely available from local health departments, home health agencies, and doctor's offices.



Shawn Richards, ISDH influenza surveillance coordinator (second from left), observes as Patrick Durkin, Office of Chronic and Communicable Disease (right), receives a flu shot at the ISDH employee flu clinic held in November 2002.

Photo by Daniel Axler

Technology Upgrades Improve Health Care Data Handling

Sarah Roe, program manager for Health Care Data Services, Long-Term Care Division, says that a number of improvements have been implemented in her area since the last *Express* update was published in July 2001.

A significant technology change to be implemented within the next several weeks will improve efficiency in communicating aide status changes by ISDH to nursing homes and home health agencies.

According to Don Craig, Registry Supervisor, administrators in licensed nursing homes, home health agencies, and hospices each need current information about the legal status of nurse aides for making employment decisions consistent with Indiana code.

To be eligible to work as a nurse aide, home health aide, or qualified medication aide in Indiana, an applicant must be listed in good standing in the Indiana State Nurse Aide Registry, according to Craig.

"For an aide to be listed, requires a clear working record free of confirmed findings of abuse, neglect, or misappropriation of property," Craig said.

The aide must also have completed state-approved training, be a currently certified nurse aide or registered home health aide, and acquire the continuing education credits to qualify for appropriate certification or registration every two years.

There are more than 123,000 aides whose names reside in the Registry, Craig says.

Of that total, more than 600 are former aides who have been listed with confirmed findings. These persons are prohibited from working as nurse aides in Indiana.

To check the status of an aide, an employer or an aide must access information in the Registry.

According to Roe, until recently the information was provided through an automated telephone system that had become inadequate to handle the increased number of names. An upgrade was not possible because the original developer had gone out of business.

Currently, a typical employer request

for a registry check is handled by two ISDH clerks who work full-time providing registry information to callers over the telephone. That situation is about to change, Roe says, and happily, according to Craig who oversees operation of the Registry.

When the Indiana Department of Information Technology (DOIT) discovered that both ISDH and the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) had similar needs for an automated phone answering system, DOIT decided to develop a prototype robust enough

aide or home health aide," Hayes said.

On the rare occasions that the telephone data base is down or if the caller has difficulty, calls will be transferred to an operator, virtually eliminating any possibility for delay in getting the desired information during normal working hours.

The operator may suggest contacting the Access Indiana Web site for additional information. The Web site also can provide the findings on line. In addition, the Web site is useful for providing phone numbers and Web site information for nurse aide registry information in other states, where an aide may have worked.

For Roe and Craig, the biggest plus of the interactive telephone set-up will be displacing a work overload on the two full-time clerks who must continue to provide custom assistance to callers who have other needs for information.

Another technology advance involves refinements in the automated system for provider reporting of nurse aide status changes. Typical status changes are the start or termination of employment, new address information, or completion of biennial recertification requirements.

Twenty months ago, Long-Term Care began using a CD ROM disk which it mailed to all nursing homes. To assist nursing homes in the preparation of electronic status change reports for floppy disk submission to ISDH, the disk contained electronic data entry forms and instructions. The process virtually eliminated the need for manual transcription from paper forms, and relieved two full-time ISDH clerks from this arduous task.

The current incarnation of the CD ROM includes a simplified data entry form that has eliminated 10 of the information fields and has reduced the form from a two-page document to a single page. According to Roe, this is a major improvement because, in the past, respondents often inadvertently failed to complete the second page, which required follow-up by ISDH staff.



SARAH ROE (left) and **JIM HAYES** test new interactive phone system. Hayes is the senior systems analyst and project manager for development of the new system, and Roe is program manager of the Division of Long-Term Care, Health Care Data Services, where Hayes works.

Photos by Daniel Axler

to be customized to handle the separate data management needs of both agencies.

"Within the next several weeks, when the new interactive automated telephone setup is ready, a caller will begin to access the registry data base by entering the social security number of the aide on the phone's keypad," said Jim Hayes, ISDH management information systems project manager for the new interactive phone system.

"The computer attached to the phone at ISDH will access the data base and report one of the following four responses:

1. the nurse or home health aide is certified or registered in good standing;
2. the aide is not listed in the Registry;
3. the aide has been certified or registered, but the certification or registration has expired; or,
4. there are findings and the applicant is ineligible to work in Indiana as a nurse

ISDH Hepatitis Immunization Program Receives Award and Features Staff Poster Presentations at National Conference



BEVERLY SHEETS, ISDH Perinatal Hepatitis B Program coordinator, holds achievement award plaque received from Deborah L. Wexler, M.D., National Immunization Action Coalition, and Harold S. Margolis, M.D., director, Division of Viral Hepatitis at the CDC.

"A 37 percent increase in the completion of the three-dose series of hepatitis B vaccine for infants born to hepatitis B positive mothers" in Indiana was cause for presentation of an achievement award to the Indiana State Department of Health Immunization Program's Perinatal Hepatitis B Program.

The award was received by Beverly Sheets on behalf of the ISDH Immunization Program during the special awards luncheon at the National Hepatitis Coordinator's Conference, which was held in San Antonio, Texas on January 26-30, 2003.

The ISDH Perinatal Hepatitis B Program (PHB) was developed and implemented in 2000.

Sheets is the PHB Coordinator. Staff attending the ceremony were: Shannon Goheen, PHB Field Investigator for southern Indiana; and Kari St. Bernard Tapley, PHB Field Investigator for Central Indiana.

Others attending the conference from Indi-

ana were Julia Butwin, Dave Garner, Cheryl Pearcy, and Angela Thompson.

Abstracts were submitted and accepted for Poster Sessions from Kari St. Bernard Tapley, "Educating Female Offenders on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Hepatitis A, B and C;" and Angela Thompson, "Hepatitis Education in a Juvenile Correctional Setting."

Also presenting a poster was Mayola Rowser of the University of Southern Indiana on "Collaborative Efforts for Prevention/Screening of STD's in an Incarcerated Population."

Attendees showed much interest in the projects presented by the posters from Indiana staff, according to Sheets.

The title of the conference was "Integration of Services for the Prevention of Viral Hepatitis."

The annual conference is designed to provide training and networking opportunities to assist public health and other professionals working with clients at risk for viral hepatitis. This year's conference focus was on prevention of perinatal, infant, childhood, adolescent, and adult infections, and included topics on substance abusers/injection drug users, and men who have sex with men.

Attendees included representatives from various fields of public health, comprising administrators, educators, and others interested in the prevention and control of viral hepatitis.



KARI ST. BERNARD TAPLEY, a private contractor, who represents the ISDH Hepatitis Program in Delaware County, stands with her conference poster presentation, *Educating Female Offenders on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Hepatitis A, B and C*.



ANGELA THOMPSON, a private contractor, who also represents the ISDH Hepatitis Program, shows off her conference presentation, *Hepatitis Education in a Juvenile Correctional Setting*.

Photo by Julia Butwin



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